

Assistive Technology:

A Resource
For Long Term Care
Options Counseling

Assistive Technology (AT)

- Definition: Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially or off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

WisTech

- Wisconsin's Assistive Technology program
- Funded under Federal AT Act
- Device Loan program
- Device Demonstrations
- Equipment Reutilization
- Alternative Financing (WisLoan)
- <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/disabilities/wistech/index.htm>

Devices for Sensory Disabilities

- Visual magnifiers, closed circuit TVs, talking devices, audio text materials
- Computer access devices/software
Large display, voice output, voice recognition
- Hearing aids, Assistive Listening Devices
 - Most effective when assessment is done by audiologist

Devices for Safety

- (When Individual can initiate their own response)
 - Calling for help via phone
 - Automatic dialing
 - Voice activated calls
 - Cell phones with programmed numbers

Safety

- Lifeline type services
- Personal emergency response phone
- Other monitoring
 - Listening devices
 - Wireless doorbell
 - Video camera

Monitoring

- To keep track of movements, personal space issues.
- Wanderguard type devices
- Monitors for movement, standing up, etc.
- Global positioning devices

Privacy

- Phones
 - Caller ID
 - Call Blocking of Certain numbers
 - Contact PSC for Annoyance Call Bureau
- Doors and Security
 - Security systems
 - Keyless door locks
 - Peep holes
 - Phone Video at entry

Durable Medical Equipment - DME

- Includes Assistive Technology that is "Medically Necessary"
- Policy Limitations by program
- Medical Necessity differs by state, federal, private providers

Who Supplies DME ?

- Medical Equipment Vendors, Pharmacies, Rehab Clinics, Hospital Outpatient
 - Usually requires Prior Authorization (PA)
 - Most items can be obtained without PA for Rental (60 days)
- Consider used equipment (Wheelchair Recycling Program)

Other Resources

- Independent Living Centers
- Catalogs, on-line resources
- TEPP funding to access phone services
- WisLoan to obtain financing for purchase of equipment

Independent Living Centers

- Provide individual assistance regarding selecting, trying-out many AT devices
- Direct consumers to manufacturers and funding sources
- 8 ILCs are located throughout the state
 - <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/disabilities/physical/ILCs.htm>

Wheelchair Recycling Program

<http://www.wrp.org/>

- Recycled, repaired, and cleaned DME for purchase.
- Wheelchairs, hospital beds, lifts, bath equipment.
- An option for persons who are not covered by Medicaid/Medicare or desire back-up equipment.
- Lower cost for institutional equipment.

WisLoan as a Funding Option

- Wisconsin's Alternative Financing Program
- Helping people with disabilities to purchase assistive technology (AT)

How Loan Board Decides

- Application is anonymous
- Credit history
- Credit score
- Monthly income/expenses
- Does the requested item meet AT definition?
- Is it likely that the consumer will pay back the loan?

Loan Process

- Consumer contacts their ILC
- Meet with ILC staff, discuss AT and make application
- Application is reviewed at monthly WisLoan Board meeting
- Decision – approve, deny, ask for more info

WisLoan – What does our experience Indicate?

- Applicants – Persons with Disabilities
 - Live on low incomes
 - willing to take on unrealistic financial obligations to get what they want.
- Misinformation, limited choices, lack of information, resources regarding available technologies and funding
- Serious need for financial literacy and credit/fraud abuse information to avoid costly financial alternatives
- Greatest AT need is for personal transportation due to disability and lack of options.

AT Requested

- Vehicles or Vehicle Modifications 54%
- Home Modifications 13%
- Hearing Aids 11%
- Computers 6%
- Other items...visual aid, chair lift, daily living aids, etc.

Helpful Information

- WisLoan website
<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/disabilities/wisloanch/wisloan.htm>
- WI Department of Financial Institutions
<http://www.wdfr.org/links/fe.htm>
- UW Extension Family Living – Financial management
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/economics/management.cfm>

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